SPLINTERS

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SPLINTERS is a student-published literary magazine sponsored by the Washington College Writer's Union.

We gratefully acknowledge the Writer's Union for providing the funds to make this magazine possible, and Carolyn Fleming for assisting in its publication. Thank you. And beware of the monster you have created.

w.b.
K.L.

The Satire Alert

by bill beekman

Welcome. Splinters, as you may have heard, is a satire magazine. I'm sure of that, because I'm one of the founding fathers of this publication, founded on the high ideals of satire. Cleanliness is next to godliness and satire is dirty work.

I write knowing that few people will understand (even those of you who do probably don't). I take that for granted. It's part of my master plan.

You see, satire is about to take over around here, led by me and my group, of course. Not just on this campus, which you may have heard dark whispers about, but all over. That's why I write this satire alert, which I know you won't take seriously since it's satire. You're not supposed to, you know. If you do take it seriously, of course, I'll make you look foolish by saying it's satire, which you're not supposed to take seriously. We've got you covered. Joe Heller called it "Catch-22." He writes satire, also, so you better keep your eyes on him, too.

We're not dumb, you see. We cover our asses. And we've even got a Constitution that protects us even while we harm other people. We can change that when we're in control, though, which won't be too long from now. But for now it's rather convenient.

Let me write it again just so you can't say you haven't been warned: Satire Alert. I'll write it bigger, too, and in boldface type:

SATIRE ALERT

You'll look dumb later for not saying anything now. But then again, you'll look dumb now if you say something. Best way out, and this is a hint, is to join us.

Anyway, our master plan, like any other revolutionary group, is to change things. Big things, small things, stupid things, smart things, things that work fine, things that are broken down, things that have no purpose, and on and on. Mostly big things, though. We satire people generally don't know what we're talking about, we don't know the facts, so we'll end up screwing eveything up, anyway, which is just what we want. Master plan, remember?

We've got ideas, too, you know, like for dealing with people who speak out against us. I guess that we could kill them or maim them, but that seems too conventional for us satire people. We're creative geniuses, you see, which means that we do things differently. Creative tortures sound good, like writing little satirical quips with sharp-bladed pens over the naked bodies of trangressors.

We satire people enjoy sex, too, which you should keep in mind.

Anyway, this is a satire alert, so I might as well alert you to something. I'll look twenty years in the future, which my mind can do quite easily, and show you how things will be. Notice I say "will," not "might." I'm no Ghost of Chistmas Yet to Come.

Bang, thick smoke, spinning heads, and whatever other illusions you need to

make it seem like twenty years has passed. You open your eyes and look at a sign which reads: "You are here," with a little arrow pointing to the year 2007. Amazing.

You're fortyish now, with hair that is greying and thinning despite the latest chemichal inventions to prevent it from doing that. Satire can't stop that, although it can make it come faster.

You've got 2.3 kids, a dog, a bachelor's degree from Washington College which hangs on the wall of your office, a job that pays forty-nine five grand a year, before taxes, with a months vacation and travel expenses. You're married, sometimes happily, although you cheat on your wife with a twenty-two year old named Inga (or your husband with twenty year old named Bill). Inga (or Bill) gives good, youthful sex, which helps you forget about your greying, thinning hair and your car payments and your spouse who snores at night.

Like the baby boomers of decades ago, who are now complaining, depressed senior citizens, you've been classified, into a group called the Reagan Revolution, which is not a nice classification here in 2007.

As you can see, and this may please you at first, you and everyone else did not die in a nuclear war, although every day the television, which still exists, too, cries out more worries about conflicts doomed to bring on World War III and the end of man. You see, maybe we really didn't have to spend $300 plus billion dollars a year on war things, even though they claimed it kept a balance of power, although education certainly could have used some sort of lift.

(Star Wars, by the way, which people haven't thought about for years, didn't make it.)

We're just about out of the educational depression now. We beat Korea and West Germany the other day in an international math test which caused stir of forgotten patriotism.

The Soviet Union and the U.S., by the way, are no longer superpowers. That helped a lot in ending the educational depression. The U.S. and Soviet Union, however, are the two global powers which hold a rational, paternal-like hand over other nations. It's funny, but these two nations resemble each other more with each day. They are both recovering moderates after years of troubled radicalism and expensive war-mongering. That's good. Now if they could just could just control those radical little countries...

Don't get upset, but some of you may be dead, having died in the Persian Gulf War which lasted for six years although we never formally announced it as a war, or of AIDS, which twelve percent of your population died from until an effective vaccination was discovered in 2001. That's when the sexual revolution was revived, at long last.

This is a neat twist from 1987 times: In the Persian Gulf War, which started in the failed Bush Administration, the United States and Soviet Union were sort of allies, although they wouldn't announce that and always bickered over little things that the other had done. Together, though, they brought an end to the war, although each took sole credit for that, too. Later, though, they divulged their common grounds and admitted that, no, they really weren't all that different. People had been

thinking that for years.

New, tricky things have come up, which you have no concept of. Robots were popular for a while, but quickly fizzled. Computers grew, although they shrunk, so that now they regulate everything from the pH levels of your goldfish tank to the beeper which goes off when your shoe laces become untied. Yes, we still have those things. Velcro straps just didn't cut it.

By the way, some freaky doomsayer writers, some of whom are satirists, write crazy stories about computers taking over humans, which is already partially true. Funny, thing though: they write their stories on computers.

Here is some good, well OK news: Homosexuals and blacks and jews and others are basically not discriminated against, although the KKK still exists. Some people still yell from street corners with bullhorns about the fascist, Communist Soviets. America should bomb the hell out of those fascist pigs, they argue, mostly unheard. No black or woman, still, has become President, although many forecasters say that next year's election is the year it will happen.

And the big news today was that the Soviet Union and U.S. are planning a joint, manned mission to Mars within the next ten years. Other countries, China, Japan, France, West Germany, are involed, too. Details will come later, but I'll give you this hint: the mission, after mostly political and a few technical problems, will be successful.

Other things, of course, are happening: men still watch football games on Sunday; politicians still hate the press; people still exchange gifts on Christmas; four year old kids still take great delight in being able to tie their shoes for the first time; old ladies still like to crochet rugs for their grandchildren while on bus trips to Atlantic City; people with long hair still write poems that people with short hair don't understand.

Maybe this satire stuff has worked after all. Things seem much the same, but progressing. New satirists, however, are always cutting up this and that, which is a bit of a problem. I don't know why.

More smoke, bangs, spinning heads, and other unnecessary illusions, and we return to 1987, Washington College, which also has a sign behind Bill Smith that says "You are here." Things are clear here, although if you think about them enough they grow awfully fuzzy.

I've thought about something: maybe this isn't satire. But with me in control around here, I can make it anything that I want -- in the name of satire.

The Idle Musings of a Severed Head

by mike cannon

"You guys wouldn't happen to have a-"

-CHOP!!!-

Funny how those final words seem to stick in a person's head even as it sails higher and higher in the sky. I can't help but laugh in amazement, though. That fisherman on the ground back there is really a whiz with a blade. Just one quick swing of a sword at the right angle, and here I am soaring through the chilly, damp Chestertown air, heads above the rest. Ah, but I see that I am falling now-

-SPLURP-

Hmm, how fortunate to drop into the lovely Chester River. I could have been hurt if I landed in water from that altitude, and here I don't have to cope with that incessant bobbing up and down. This is nice and steady; I like that in a body of water. Kinda gives a severed head a chance to sort things out, you know.

I believe it all started at dinner one day when I was eating something that resembled a hemmorhoid sandwich. Jim came by and said, "You are a useless womanless slug and a piece of societal scum. All you do is eat, go to class, eat, mess around, eat some more, get drunk, and spill your orange juice on the floor."

"I beg to differ with you," I replied. "That only happens on Fridays and Saturdays. The rest of the time, I don't get drunk or spill my orange juice on the floor."

"You're still societal scum," Jim insisted. "Look, you pay eleven g's a year just to take a shower with a bunch of basketball players every morning and eat hemmorhoid sammiches for lunch."

"Sammiches?" I inquired, for I did not speak jive at the time.

"Yeh, you hud me. Sammiches."

"I bet you didn't know that ravioli don't float," I said as I tossed one into his diet Coke. His untimely verbal abuse had aroused a sense of malice in me. You see, I had experienced a brief moment of delirium a little earlier. Others said it was insanity, but I still think it was a delirium brought on by not eating all day and then stepping in a huge load of dog shit outside my dorm. I had to spend nearly an hour cleaning it off and with a smothering amount of homework to do, I just snapped. But only briefly. Ever since then I was filled with a great sense of hate and a burning need to assault other humans. In this case puppies and kittens just wouldn't do, so I fished the ravioli out of Jim's drink and placed it in his Jello.

"I bet you were unaware that quality ravioli don't leak, as that one in your

dessert is doing right now."

"Why is that?" Jim asked.

"Because quality ravioli are more tightly packed, and they don't float even less. That's why nobody ever knows when a Chef Boy-ar-Dee tanker sinks. There's never any evidence of a ravioli spill. Just remember that."

"Why?"

"Because if you're ever working on an offshore pasta rig, you'll be aware if problems develop. Stupid."

"Oh. Well I would never work on one of those. I've got this phobia about sperm whales."

"Why, did you have a bad experience with one as a child or something?" At that point I just got rude and blatantly laughed in his face.

"Well as a matter of fact, I did," he retorted. "My father took advantage of my pet sperm whale and made it make bulk donations to the sperm bank. I've been too embarassed to face one ever since."

Whether a plausible idea or not, the phrase "get rich quick" raced through my demented, and currently, slightly dented head. I began scheming at once, for my love of money is indeed great. I quickly scarfed down my remaining ravioli and rushed out of the dining hall. My shifty eyes and hunched frame were cause for vicious giggles from many an airhead female, but I didn't care. Money took top priority. There would be plenty of time for babes later. I couldn't help but snicker as I broke into a snide grin.

When I got back to my room, I sized up in my mind how I would knock out all the walls in the dorm to make room for whales and water. But petty architectural details would have to wait for later. I snatched my keys from their hook by the door and sped off on my scooter minutes later.

My eyes darted left and right as I roared down 213 at a thunderous forty miles per hour. I ignored the bugs pelting my forehead until I finally spotted what I was looking for. Just as I spied the C-Town Pets and Ammo sign, a flock of gnats smacked into my left eyeball. "Boy things really seem to be assaulting my head today," I thought to myself.

That thought really rang true as I turned into the parking lot. Consumed by an irrational desire for money, power, and, of course, babes, I failed to slow down, and as with most parking lots in this backwards ass town, it was gravel. The tires held okay as I went in, but the front one kicked up the most humungous piece of gravel ever made and shot it into my hairline. I let out a brief whimper of pain and forced myself to shrug the incident off. The store was about to close now that it was past six o'clock. I rushed in so fast that I was immediately engulfed in pet store stench. Normally, that horrible mixture of wood shavings and puppy-urine-soaked newspaper would have made me flee within minutes, but I maintained my faculties and engaged in some transcendental meditation. I managed to survive, all the while scanning the store for a proprietor. Once spotted, I rushed up to him, a balding man of about fifty, and attempted to speak.

"Ah wah uh baa uh spuhm whai," was all that my mouth could manage. Even

though my head was still attached at the time, I hadn't thought to retract my tongue on the drive over. After being whipped around in the wind for a while it had turned into something resembling beef jerky. Too bad it didn't taste as good. However, I just simply had to talk so I let it hang in the nearest fishbowl for a while.

The man I was about to talk to, who turned out to be the owner, became somewhat irate at this activity. "Hey pal," he hollered in a redneck drawl, "can I give you a hand with somethin' there? You better talk fast or I'm gonna kick your college ass outta here."

By then my tongue was moist enough to speak in a recognizable language, so I asked him if he had-

-CLUNK!!-

"Still lookin' fer thet sperm whale are you, matey," bellowed a voice from inside a decrepit rowboat. I looked up to see a bearded old gent about to hit me again with an oar. The face didn't seem familiar so I tried to reel back in horror, only to find that I was firmly mired in the Chester. Consequently, I got hit upside the head, which was really all he *could* hit, again.

"I said, is ya still lookin' fer thet sperm whale? Answer me boy."

Feeling the need to respond, I said, "Yes, but merely as a pet for now." I couldn't think of anything to say, probably because it came as such a surprise to have an old man talking to me, now a severed head. I had sort of written off further social contact and, as a matter of fact, I was kind of expecting to die.

The old man in the boat smiled when I said I wanted the whale as a pet. "What happened to the fortune yeh was gonna mek?" he inquired.

"How did you know about that?" From what I remembered, the only person I had seen about that had been the last person, and it surely wasn't him. After getting my tongue moistened up in the pet store, I was thrown out by the old bastard who owned the place. He thought I was doing some kind of fraternity prank or something and just didn't feel like putting up with me anymore.

When I left the store, my mind was still swarming with that same delirium. It was further enhanced by the fact that my scooter wouldn't start. I wound up wandering the streets of Chestertown until it got dark, when I found myself on the docks. At the far end of one was a lighted area that I took to be a fishery. New hope made the blood pump through my veins with renewed vigor. Visions of stacks of money, hot cars, and, of course, babes began to flow through my tired brain again. It seemed like I was flying in an outer body experience when I came upon the fishery. Oriental men in dark hooded suits were standing around a table chopping the heads off salmon and pulling out the insides. The insides, it occured to me, came packaged in

neat little Ziploc baggies and were all white.

I rushed up to them so fast that I knocked over a table of cod and made a hell of a lot of noise. "Ha, yew gi no wha I cah geh ah spuhm whai?" Once again, I had left my tongue hanging out of my mouth and couldn't speak. Ordinarily, that kind of habit would annoy me because I like to be understood, but I was too crazed to even acknowledge it's presence.

Those guys got the strangest look on their faces when I said that. They all turned around snarling, like a coven of hooded Bruce Lees. Since they were surrounded by fish, I thought they were right-wing ninja save-the-whalers or something. Before I could even salivate enough to gulp in fear, the nearest one had whipped out a sword longer than I was tall, and chopped my head clean off.

My first thought was one of gratitude. From my anatomy classes in school, I realized that a clean cut has less of a chance of being infected. The last thing I needed in my life was a festering scab. But then my predicament became somewhat more apparent. Those fellas cut my head off, I assumed, because they didn't like me or something. My eyes looked down as my head soared up, to see the body I left behind fighting like a madman. Fists were flying in every direction and I just smiled. If you gotta die, it's good to go out fighting.

"So yeh've been floatin' in the rivuh ever since, eh?" the old man in the boat asked. Gosh, my memory really must be failing me. I totally forgot he was there. Otherwise, I would have spoken out loud what happened to me, rather than be rude and keep it to myself. Hey! How'd he know?

"Hey! How'd you know what I was thinking old man?" I asked. Deep down I thought I might be entering another delirium.

"I am the mighty Chester. I know everything." The old man smiled, revealing wooden teeth in places.

"Holy shit, I am getting delirious," I said under my breath.

"Ahh, ah, ah, I heard thet too," he said as if I were a naughty little boy. "If you be good, I'll give yeh thet whale yeh've been wantin'."

By now, any prospects of riches and physical gratification had been completely fogotten. I didn't want to remember them either. On the verge of certain death, they seemed immature and useless. "Like my whole life," I reflected out loud. I knew Chester was hearing what I said no matter what, so I only spoke when I felt like it. The actions of speech were beginning to be difficult to manage and I was getting paler by the minute.

It suddenly occured to me that the sun was up and shining brightly. If I remember correctly, my head was chopped off when it was dark.

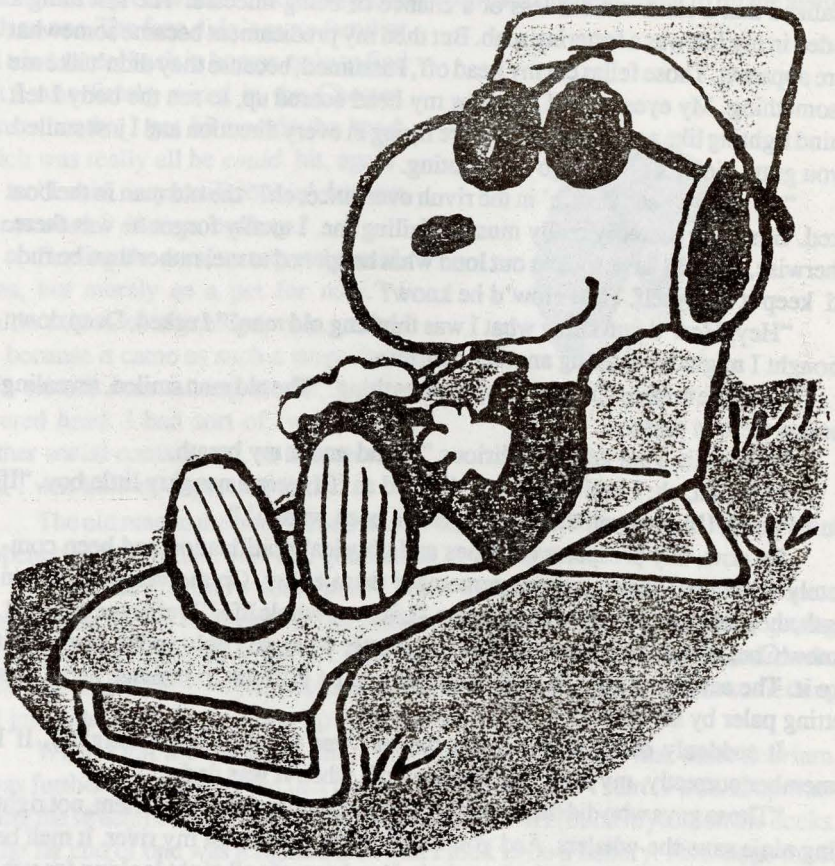
"Those guys who did this to yeh are drug smugglers from the Orient, not right wing ninja save-the-whalers. And you're still alive because of my river. It meh be scummy, but it's got a lot o' nutrients in it. I've been out all night looking fer yeh. My vision's not quite so good as it used teh be, you know."

"Well thank you for finding me Chester," I said. I was curious as to why he was looking for me, but I was just too tired to ask. Whether true or not, I assumed the Mighty Chester to be God or at least the closest I would ever get to seeing Him.

That thought put my mind to rest.

"It's nice to have somebody to say good-bye to now that it's all over," I said resignedly. At last, I started crying. Not that life was over though, but because nothing was really accomplished. "I may have been a melodramatic asshole, but at least I was....never a.....gas station attendant. My eyes closed, eagerly.

"That's the spirit matey," Chester said in a comforting voice. "Have a good long sleep. Your whale will be waitin' fer yeh at the end of your trip. You need the rest."



A Poem to Johnny Homeboy

Jackie boy of quatrameter fame,
Writes rhymed verse which is really quite lame.
You probably think this poem is about you; you're so
vain.

—dedicatory episitle—

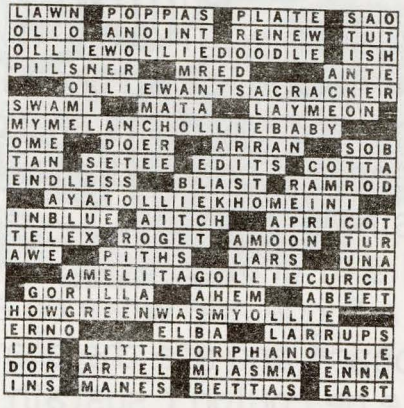
The rain in Spain
Stays mainly in the plain.
It gave his brain
An incredible pain.
He stuck his peter into a drain,
His muscles strained as he came
Again, and again, and again, and again.
The narrow drain caused him great pain.
The record in his pocket* drove him insane.
He pursued his quest* further with a Great Dane.
It accepted his vein with very little pain.
Without much disdain, he stroked its main.
As night conquered day,* his energy waned.
He left the Dane and boarded a train.
While composing a quatrain,
He developed a migraine.
He went into a fugue and woke on a plane.
He cooked a boar* and ate the brain,
He sang a note he couldn't sustain.

He climbed out of a knapsack* somewhere in Maine,
He released some flatulence he couldn't contain,
Like many of his poems, it left a stain.
It reeked so bad that day did wane,
But day will return* again,
And again, and again, and again.
(Notice the use of clever refrain.)
Please, dear Jack, please explain
Why your verse is so inane.
You give poetry a bad name.
You slaughter the Muse, like Abel by Cain.

—a lampoon by the Wicomico Committee for Competent Poetry (W.C. C. P)

*Note: Allusions to work by J.H.
See appropriate texts.
If you're into pain.

Solution to Last Week's Puzzle



The Diet From Hell
(It Could Happen To You!)

by Kelly Lamoree

"I'm putting you on a low-fat diet," the doctor said, sitting back in his chair like a judge who has just told a prisoner that he was putting him on indefinite leave of life. The prisoner, Marla in this case, doesn't know exactly what this sentence entails but is aware that it is not something pleasant. Marla Perkins does not know that her life— as she knows it— is about to end.

"Okay..." The doctor continued on, discussing the diet. "I want you to follow this as strictly as you can, for one month. It should improve things; I'll want to see you after that month so we can see how you're doing." He reached around and pulled a square white piece of paper out of a huge grey filing cabinet behind him. It registered dimly in her mind that in that cabinet were diets and instructions and fix-its for probably every ailment known to (this) man. She took the paper that he handed to her and glanced at it, seeing the usual instructions to eat more fruits and fibers; looked pretty tame so she nodded and dismissed it. They finshed up the apppointment, which had already lasted for an hour, and Marla went to the receptionist, gave her the appropriate pieces of paper and information, then got into her car and left.

It had been been a grueling set of weeks; every day she was able to eat less and less without wanting to beg someone, perhaps a kindly young person on the subway, to release her fron this torture. Here it should be added that food is Marla's life. She lived for it, she breathed for it, she would die for it. She looked forward to the arrival of her special shipment at the gourmet food shop down on Spring Street, and just as eagerly awaited the publication of new cookbooks and the newest issue of magazines about food, the favorite being anything that has to do with desserts. Dessert. What a scrumptious word in and of itself, she thought. Dessert.

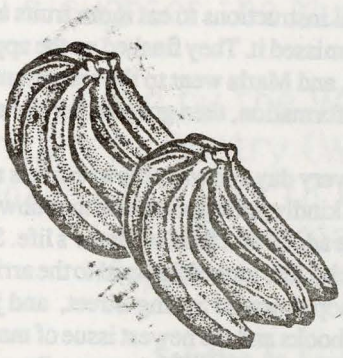
Chocolate mousse. Ices. Glaceés. Ice cream. Pie. Pudding. Torte. Cookies. Cakes. Trifles. Squares. Baklava. Meringues. Oh how the list went on and on and on and on. Second only to desserts were cheeses: brie (especially baked brie), camembert, muenster, swiss, cheddar. The patés. The sauces. The meats. The breads. There are few foods she didn't like; the only sin a food could be involoved in is if it was simple or terribly nutritious. Things like high fiber cereals, wheat bread, fruits, vegetables. They are hell foods, things that people in hell eat because they are not allowed things with flavor. Food.

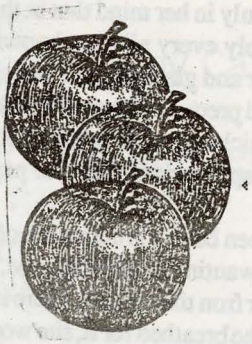
Even seeing it in advertisements was an event for Marla. She could almost smell that fried chicken, she could almost taste that baked ham. Commercials and televised food are also events, especially the frozen dessert (!) kind.

On her way home from the doctor that day, Marla stopped at a local Friendlie's

and ordered the biggest sundae, with marshmallow, hot fudge, sprinkles, butterscotch sauce, strawbery sauce and whipped cream. A regular customer at this particular establishment, she was recognized upon sight and soon had her delicious confection in front of her. Dinner was only an hour away, but she needed a nice snack beforehand.

Marla took her long handled spoon and began to consume the sundae; she had had so many of this sort by then that she never thought how it must look to the rest of the people in the place. Luckily, and surprisingly, her generous eating habits had not in fact made her a heifer-sized young woman, so that was one less thing that they could comment upon. In fact, she was remarkably fit looking and of healthy appearance. She was sure that she had been called a pig, a glutton, a gourmand, a veritable eating machine, but it had never bothered her as she believed very strongly in the carpe diem theory and was resolved to eat everything she wanted to. After all, suppose she died tomorrow without having had the best baked Alaska to be found in the hemisphere— life would have been for naught.





Halfway through the sundae she decided that the people around there were not interesting enough to sit and look at so she reached around into her pocket and pulled out the diet that the doctor had given her. It looked innocuous enough, in simple black and white, neatly and clearly detailing the "Foods to Omit" and the "Foods Permitted." Marla looked under the permitted foods first, confident that nothing really radical would appear before her sundae-glutted eyes. After perusing that list for a couple minutes, she was confused. It said things like fruits, vegetables. Lean meats. Shredded cheese. Skim milk. Ice milk, for god's sake. Her blood pressure started to go up; she could feel it. She could feel the blood racing angrily through her veins, the muscles starting to tighten. Her stomach curling into a nasty round ball like Ali's fist.

With the speed of a sharpshooter reaching for the trigger at the signal "fire!" she glanced at the "foods to omit" list, and felt like fainting, like wailing in a fashion reminscent only of a Greek tragedy. It was horrible. It was dreadful. It was the site

of the most incredible calamity. She should have known that fate would not let her be happy, she thought," I should have known. "

For in the "Foods to Omit" column, were words like cheese, ice cream, chocolate, cake. It was the vocabulary of her life and she was forbidden to ever speak the words again. Marla would be mute. Sentenced to a life of nutritous food.

Despite the panic that seized her tighter than any person had ever seized her - probably because in a way she was closer to her food than to people - she put her sundae spoon down, got up, paid her check, and left, dumbfounding the waitress and the hostess, who really meant it when she asked if any thing had been wrong. Marla smiled rather sadly when this question was asked, and said that no, everything had been perfect. It had been her "last meal," after all.

As she drove home she could barely see the streets for the vision of vicchychoise and chocolate cream pie that wafted in front of her eyes, tantalyzing and cruel. She stumbled into the house and into the kitchen, where she sort of stared dumbly at the cupboards now full of forbidden food. The only right thing to do would be to throw it all out. Start anew. Stock her cabinets with permitted foods. Dismal thought. She felt like a novititate, casting aside her worldy goods for a new, sanctified life. It was terribly traumatizing.

PHASE ONE

The first two weeks were the easiest. She expected life to be hell, devoid of enjoyment, and so it was. A completely alien culture is less shocking when when one doesn't know just how disaparate it is from one's own; when the shock wears off, that's when the trouble begins. The first week was spent bravely digesting new, plain foods. No more hollandaise sauce, no more creamed soups, no more coconuts or avacadoes. She searched for a suitable cookbook, and found one— with the most unpalatable nonsense that ever pretended to be a recipe. It was dismal indeed, but she tried. It couldn't be all that bad.

The second week was a little more difficult than the first. Marla started noticing more food that was *verboten* , and began to yearn for it. She told herself that self-discipline was what she needed most and condemned herself for a dietetic wimp. Friends, aquaintances and co-workers at the department store where she worked began to comment on her short-tempered disposition of late; she dismissed it and told them that it wouldn't be for long.

PHASE TWO

Marla started dreaming of mountains of whipped cream, houses of waffles, lakes of yogurt. Food haunted her days, terrorized her nights. She had sad meals of bananas and bran flakes, where she used to have eggs benedict, toast, and milk. She had tragic meals of crackers, celery and thin broths, where once she had sandwiches piled high, replete with taste and satisfaction. She had catastrophic meals of spinach and tomato salad, plain broiled fish, steamed rice. No more coffee

or tea, unless she wanted it black and unadorned. No candy except for mints or hard stuff. Visions of ten pound Godiva boxes taunted her. Even chocolate chip cookies were denied. Even peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Even potatoes.

Food obsessed her in a new way now, in much the same way that old age obsesses a thirty year old AIDS patient. In the way that the moth is obesessed with the light and the heat of a star. In the way that a neighbor's new car obsesses a struggling couple who are threatened with bankruptcy if the interest rate goes up another point. She tried valiantly to rid herself of these feelings, to tell herself that it was for her own good.

Ultimately she did not care if it was good for her or not. She was miserable. Supermarkets and lunchtimes were torture, when she saw people eating food that she could never have. (Never, it seemed, because at the end of the first month her friendly executioner, the doctor, deemed it necessary to continue with this diet from hell.)

This was no life, she decided. What was the point of calling it life, to be denied anything that made one's exisitence somewhat bearable? Marla decided to rebel: to hell with it all.

She went on a binge. Ice cream, beer, eggs, chocolate anything, biscuits, brie—the whole route. Glorious, wonderful, hedonistic, sensual, delightful.

Needless to say this did a whole lot more harm than good and soon she was back on the diet, stricter than ever. By this time she had become so cranky and melancholy that she was rarely spoken to, which further augmented the well of despair which she had thrown herself into. She slipped farther and farther away from what others called reality, which didn't bother her a bit... Reality involved food; she was estranged from real food, if not widowed by it.

PHASE THREE

It was too much for her to handle. By the fourth month of this diet, Marla the former gourmet-gourmand was so close to complete insanity that she was there. One day, after a lunch of wheat bread with lettuce, fruit juice, and crackers, she calmly drove to the nearest Grand Union and at gun point, she held fifteen people hostage, demandoing their entire stock of pastries, candy, beer, eggs, and most of all, anything chocolate. She also demanded to eat all of said food before she would agree to let the hostages go.

After several weeks of intensive care, her case was tried and she was acquitted on the grounds of temporary insanity; she was put on probation on the grounds that she would consult with a reputable dietician/psychiatrist. Marla then sued her doctor for malpractice, on the grounds that he had provided the diet which had led to her temporary insanity and subsequent arrest. She won 2.7 million dollars. The pyschiatrist was able to find a chemical substitute for Marla's beloved foods, and combined with hypnosis and a new job in a candy factoy. Marla now leads a normal life.

The Bohemian Prayer

Oh great god of weirdness, please help me through my day, help me to endure the fate of an artist. Help me to endure life when my Beatles albums are all cracked; when my Screaming Caliplers tape refuses to play. Help me to live through the day, oh great tie-dyed one, when I no longer look interesting in my unmatching clothes, when no one notices me; in that dark hour of my life, may I never lose faith in all I have have held true.

Our Hippy who art in heaven, weirdness be thy name. Though the day be short and I may have to work, the night will come, thy will be done and at Palladium shall I rest in bliss, in conformity. In our oneness of strangeness of noneness we find strength. Amen.

The Preppy Prayer

Oh great god of gold bracelets, sustain me through these dark days of matching clothes and solid colors. Help me to endure cruel fate which inflicts upon me such hell as supermarkets, the common folk, and polyester. Through the light and into the dark, when my life seemed out of *Glamour* rather than *Town and Country*, I have never never lost the faith. I am sure that my Volvo will be fixed as the mechanic claims.

Oh tweeded one, let me believe in you forever, or at least until the trust fund runs out. Help me to regain faith in the sanctity of Laura Ashley, to believe despite the miniskirts. Aid me in my plight, surrounded by middle class folk without Rolexes and old money. Amen

Leadership, the Old Fascioned Way

by Kelly Lamoree

PROLOGUE

The girl walked over to the table and sat down in front of it. "Are we ready to begin?" she asked the twenty eight people sitting in the room. There was general agreeement, nods and polite murmurs. She took the gavel and rapped it twice in the table.

She looked over to a young man who sat at her right. "Are you all set?" He too nodded. She nodded back. He picked up a pencil and began to record the minutes of the Commission for All-Campus Fairness and Joy. These minutes must be published and placed in dark alleys and under rocks, according to CAFJ bylaws, at Acme U. in Toledo, Ohio.

MINUTES OF THE CAFJ
Meeting Held October 15, 1988

President Keaton opened the meeting at 7:12pm, EST. The delay of 42 minutes from the usual opening time was due to the debate about location for the meeting. Roll was taken; 28 out of 82 members were present. President Keaton expressed her displeasure at the increased attendance by delagates, and cautioned those present to try not to make a habit of it.

After opening remarks by the President of the CAFJ, Vice President Ewing agreed with the President and motioned that any meeting at which more than 40% of the Commision appeared would violate the Constitution and said meeting would be cancelled until such time as a new secret code could be made up. That motioned was seconded by Becky Amberville and the vote was unanimious.

President Keaton then moved that the discussion be changed to more relevant matters, and VP Ewing asked what the CAFJ budget for the next fiscal year would be. Pres. Keaton referred the question to Treasurer Ray Channing, who replied that the budget was about the same as the previous year's, $17,000 not inlcuding graft and bribery. Pres. Keaton then reprimanded Treasurer Channing for his free use of language, then proposed that administration members should receive a 15% increase in salary. This motion was seconded by Treasurer Channing and the vote was 28-1, with President Keaton opposed. Keaton then propsed a 20% increase; seconded by Chaning and the vote was unanimous.

Brice Stockly gave his report on Student Surveillance Board, citing that the system needs more funds in order to work effectively, but that it was well on its way to completion. He then motioned for an additional allocation of funds, which was seconded by VP Ewing; the vote was unamimous. Treasurer Channing suggested that funds be moved from the Freshman Scholarship fund to the Student Surveillance Board; that motion was seconded by Stockley and the vote was unanimious.

Presdient Keaton gave Jane Ratchette, All Campus Social Committee Chairman, the floor. Ratchette reported that Saturday would be the annual all-campus Drink-a-thon and motioned that each organization pay $100 for refreshments. This motion was seconded by Brice Stockely. Ratchette then motioned that CAFJ members present be appointed 0ffical Chaprerones, thus going according to Campus Alcohol Policy and affording each of them free beverage and admission. Susan Channing seconded that motion; the vote was unanimous. Ratchette finished her report, explaining that the Drink-a-thon enjoyed such success in previous years that she thought it should take place during the entire weekend, closing on Sunday night with an All-Campus 0rgy. President Keaton asked if said activity would violate the Bylaw of 1982, which states that the CAFJ may not sponsor any activity which may be illegal in the state of Wisconsin and for which the college may be held liable. Vice President Ewing reminded President Keaton that this situation had come up in past years and had been sucessfully dealt with. President Keaton thanked the VP and motioned that Bylaw 12365 of 1982 be repealed and erased; the motion was seconded by Jane Ratchette; the vote was unanimous.

Sincerely,
Elijiah Dualut, CAFJ Secretary

Minutes of the CAFJ Meeting
Held 0ctober 22, 1988

President Keaton opened the meeting and welcomed all newcomers, then explained to one and all that the main purpose of tonight's meeting was to dole out club funding and could they please keep it short as she had another meeting to attend in five minutes.

Roll was taken; all members were present. President Keaton reprimanded those members who had been absent. Several delegates attempted to say that they had not recieved notification of the proper meeting place or time; President Keaton told them that this was no excuse as they could have asked her or other adminstration members. Keaton then motioned that the Club Allocations be done. "Please keep in mind CAFJ rules and regulations governing mode of address and deportment. For the uninitiated, the Constitution states that when called, applicants must state name, major, class, GPA, and organization represented. Applicants must be prepared to defend their club's claim for funds. I shall list criterion for club standings: one, those wishing to start a club must apply to the CAFJ no later than the third day of school.

Club must have a name and a hierarchical system of government. Elections will be held within the club for said offices. Clubs, excluding Greek organizations, must be open to all members of the college community, but may in the case of honor societies, have academic or other such criterion. Funds must be applied for within five days of the school year. Applications must include a full membership list with accompanying GPAs, statement of purpose of club, amount of funds requested, statement of purpose for funds requested and club must be willing to do community or otherwise service when called upon to do so by the Comission for All-Campus Fairness and Joy. Any questions. Good. First on the agenda is the Data Processing Club. Will the president of said organization please rise."

The presidient of the Data Processing club rose. She was an average looking girl of averge hieght and average weight. She looked much like President Keaton, only lacking that spark of ambition so often found in politicos on campus throughout the more radical areas of the United States.

"I'm Wanda Smith. Here is the list of our members, exactly as prescribed by the rules of the Comission for All-Campus Fairness and Joy. We request forty-five dollars." She walked over to President Keaton and handed her the list, which Keaton perused.

"Very nice. What is the purpose of your club?"

"We gather every Wednesday in the basement of our dorm and discuss the latest technology in word processing and data analysis."

"Very nice. What will the forty-five dollars be used for?"

"We would like to have some simple refreshments. We get awfully thirsty discussing these things."

"I see," said President Keaton. "We'll vote now. Any questions, commission members?"

"Yeah." A young man, a delegate from one of the east dorms, hitherto invisble, stood up. He looked confused. "I'd like to ask Pres. Smith a question." Presient Keaton assented.

"Is it true, or is it not, that what you people actually do is sit around talking about typing, and drink beer."

"No, that's *not* true," Wanda Smith said. "We drink wine coolers and sometimes mint juleps in the spring time."

"Let's vote, if there is no further discussion, "President Keaton motioned, the VP secnded. The vote was unanimous, in favor.

"Next on the list is the Geology Club. Please approach the Board."

A young, rugged looking man rose and apporached the President, the Vice-President Ewing, myself and Treasurer Channing.

"Name?"

"Jack Murphy. Geology Club." He gave the list to President Keaton.

"What is the purpose of your club, Jack?"

"We go on field trips in the areas, to study the geolocial configurations and to gather samples and specimens for further research and study in the lab."

"Good. I see that you request one hundred and fifty dollars. What is the purpose

of your funding, should you receive it?"

"We want to buy the definitive encyclopedia of geology, the *Meissenger Guide to Field Study*, and we need band-aids and such to replenish our first aid kit. "

"Oh. Funding denied. Allocation is not to be used for equipment. Try your department."

"They told us to apply to you."

"Sorry," President Keaton replied. "Next...The Language Club." A sharply dressed young woman got up and habed President Keaton the membereship list.

"I'm Bonita Alevear. We want funding for our club, please."

"What is the purpose of your club?"

"We study different customs and habits of various groups in the world."

"Could you clarify that? It sounds a little interesting." Bonita Alevear shifted a bit in her four inch high spike heeels and her miniskirt.

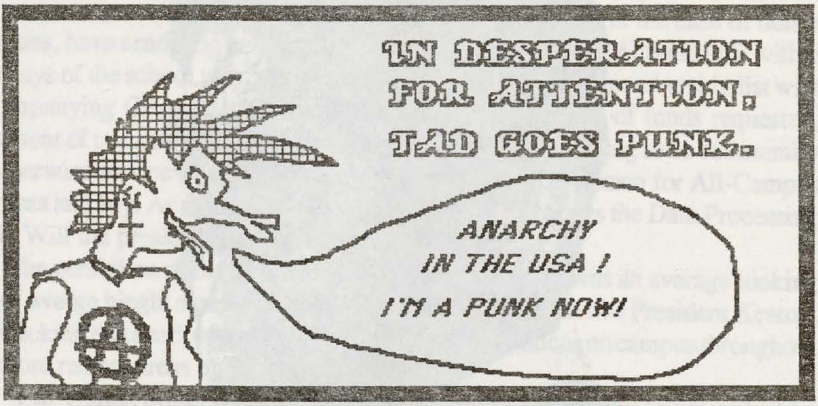
"Well, we use various texts and see what people wear in certain areas. Paris. London. Milan." President Katon nidded. "I see. What would your funds be used for?"

"To cover advertismement for our club, to pay for cable costs for FNN, and of course, for Xeroxing costs for the texts. We request three hundred and fifty dollars."

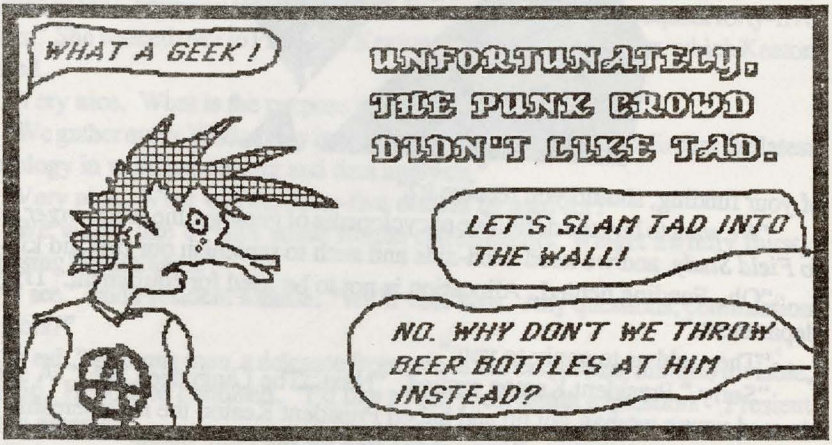
"Funding approved. That's all on our list. Meeting ajourned."

Sincerely ,
Elijiah Dualut, CAFJ Secretary.

Lifestyles of Scrotum Nose Tad



Character created by Dave Morrison


WHAT A GEEK !
UNFORTUNATELY, THE PUNK CROWD DIDN'T LIKE TAD.
LET'S SLAM TAD INTO THE WALL!
NO. WHY DON'T WE THROW BEER BOTTLES AT HIM INSTEAD?

Written and Illustrated by Denise O'Connell

The Ethics of Passion

A Tale of Morals and the Consequences Thereof

by Kelly Lamoree

The television blared as she stared at it, seeing nothing but an array of colored images and hearing nothing but smeared noises that were supposed to be voices and commercial jingles. In the backround she was aware of Jack, messing about in the kitchen, preparing dinner. He had promised her nothing less than orgasm on a plate, and remembering past dinners and lunches, she expected that. His culinary skill was one of his many fine points, and she had looked forward to this evening for the longest time.

This was really their first formal kind of dinner-date, and she had worked for hours to make herself as appetizing as she could. The dress was perfect, the hair and makeup nearly so. She had chosen to wear her favorite perfume this evening, the one her friend Bonnie jokingly called "Man-Killer No. 5.' She had known Jack for a while now, and had grown steadily more and more attracted to him. Her last boyfriend was a very attractive guy, and she had been surprised at the rapidity at which she had become interested Jack. It was not the cheap sort of substitution attraction that one goes through after a breakup; she felt attracted to him for himself. Just because he had a body that made girls watch him as he walked so sexily past, just because he was so cute that a mere pout sent them weeping to do his bidding, that was no reason why she couldn't be attracted to him for his personality. It was a fascinating one.

He was a principled libertine, a man who got upset over ideals and ideas, ever ready to do battle with any one or anything that threatened his concept of personal freedom. Sometimes he went a little too far, but Marina ignored those moments as best she could; that bit with burning the flag in front of the Dean's office (in protest of the new parking regulations) was something she really wanted to forget, for instance. It was refreshing to know someone who believed in something more than getting high or searching out the newest XTC album so that it could be listened to enough times for backwards memorization, although he did indeed believe in those things. Most of the time he kept his crusader alter ego under control, and merely believed strongly in things rather than going overboard but there were times...Jack loved all things artsy, and so cherished his right of freedom of expression so much that she sometimes considered writing her congressman to revoke it. When he found a cause that was not only morally questionable but involving the arts, he was deep in the throes of his happiest moments, in a state which was probably close to religious ectasy.

It was the libertine part of him, however, that made her able to overlook the sometimes annoying and often embarrassing crusader. There was a duality of his personality which made him one of the most fascinating men she had ever met, as

well as one of the more frustrating. He could be a complete hedonist, dedicated to fulfilling the whims of his senses, unabashed and determined. He, to her knoweldge, had always succeeded in attaining his fleshly pursuits, which impressed and intrigued her. And of course the mere sight of Jack was often enough to make her forget why she so easily became irritated with him. He was tall, but not too tall. Tall enough to be excitingly masculine but not overpowering. He was built. Oh, was he built. Those grey jeans that he wore, or a suit. And the sight of him in a sweat suit was enough to make *her* sweat. He was so cute too. And when he wanted to, he was the perfect pirate, an amourous buccaneer. The electricity between them would have burnt out many a fuse box.

She had met him in class, philosophy. He was passionately arguing a cause, but it was not what he was saying but *how* he was saying it. The verve and vivacity make her sit up straight up in her chair, eyes wide open and brain determined to meet this guy. All she could think about was how it would be to hear him speak soft words of seduction with such feeling; it nearly made her blush. Since she considered herself quite sophisticated, though, Marina did not blush.

She talked to him after class, using the pretext of asking about a homework assignment. As they talked, she could see the spark of interest in his cool blue eyes, but he in no other way revealed that he was interested in more than a superficial way. He was so charming and exciting, though, that she was content with the status quo and did not push for a romantic tryst.

That soon changed though, for Marina found herself dressing better on days when she knew that she'd see him, and making more of an effort to do homework so that she could sound intelligent/intriguing. Her work paid off. Soon the desired camaderie developed, and, as they became closer friends, they jokingly but ferociously flirted with one another. She knew that he enjoyed their friendship and really liked her, but she didn't think that he viewed her in any sort of romantic light.

So it came as a surprise the day in the library when he grabbed her around the waist and then soundly and thoroughly kissed her. She looked up at him, shocked, then kissed him back with all of the reined-in passion that had accumulated over the months of their friendship. It was glorious, to finally give in, to wallow in sheer physical desire. After approximately seven minutes they pulled apart.

Marina looked up at Jack; the look of gloating challenge usually present after she had gotten what she wanted was there— as was a certain hard shimmer of lust. At that moment she felt her youth, her insouciance which she knew would not last long because of its very nature; it coursed through her like telegrams, all sending one message.

She stood back from him. "That was rather interesting, Jack." Pleased.

"Yes, it was." She shrugged, smiling slightly, a slow rolling shrug that was reminscent of the surf as it undulated to the shore.

"Well." The conversation was interrupted as a person needed to look at a book in that aisle; the rest of the evening was rife with many such interruptions. Jack suggested finally that he make dinner for them, the next day at his place, where the phone would be off the hook and a "get the hell away" sign posted on the door.

So there she was. Waiting. She calculated the rest of the evening's itinerary: dinner had to finish cooking. Dinner had to be eaten. Lingering looks over the table would have to be endured. After dinner coffee and conversation, when at last they would go into the living room, sit on the couch and let the chips and clothes fall... where they may.

Dinner was a delicious torment, up to Jack's standards. Marina's hunger for Jack dulled her palate a bit, but she still enjoyed the meal, careful to eat slowly. It was such a temptation to just wolf down the food, in order to reach dessert and all it entailed, but she resisted. The last thing she needed was an upset stomach. It churned anyway. It seemed that Jack was eating rather fast, though, as if he had to go somewhere. Suddenly she asked, "Jack, do you have some kind of rehearsal or pep rally to attend tonight?"

"No," he replied, "you know I set aside this evening for you."

"Oh, well, I was just concerned because you were eating so fast, that's all. I was worried."

"Thought you'd miss out on a fun-filled orgiastic evening with yours truly? Not in a second, babe. I'm here, and here's where I intend to stay until I drag you into the living room. Unless you'd rather skip dessert and let me chase you around the table." She laughed. Jack was his most adorable when he was pretending (?) to be Big Male Stud. He did this often and it always put chills down her spine, *et cetera.*

"Oh no, it wouldn't be fair. You went to such trouble. It wouldn't be fair to skip something that took that long to prepare." She reached over to the box of chocolate chip cookies and selected a couple, and dunked them in her white wine. He reached over and stroked her hand lightly; she loked up at him, invitingly, but didn't say more.

"Yeah, I've always known how to satisfy," he said. She raised an eyebrow.

"Oh really. Not what I hear on the streets or what I read in the ladies room, Jack." Teasing.

"That's outdated stuff. I was young. My ex-girfriend started those rumors. She was devastated at losing me."

"Ah. I see. Well, I'll reserve judgment, then," Marina said.

"Good choice. "

"I try to make them often."

"I'm sure." They were silent, looking across from one another, over the table laden with the remains of dinner. There weren't many; Jack was such a good cook that every bite was a delight to the senses. Plates and glasses, silverware and crumpled napkins littered the smooth surface; she sighed, wondering when they would be cleaned up. The sharp carving knife for the roast sat right in front of her, gleaming through the juices from carving. Marina wondered idly if they had congealed yet.

The dinner had been somewhat titillating thus far: every time he had gotten up, his hand had brushed some part of her body, with intent. Each time, a little longer. A delicious dinner of roast beef *au jus* , potatoes, carrots (diced) and seduction.

"Want some coffee? Or maybe some brandy?" Jack's voice, soft and firm with invitation, interrupted her hyper reverie. She figured her blood pressure was probably up to about 150/120 by now, pulse probably about 95. Wouldn't it be terrible if she exploded right there in the dining room? She felt as if she might.

"Brandy? Getting a little fancy, aren't we? I'd love some. Add just the right touch of ...something." Marina thought about how delicious it would be to kiss him, with the taste of brandy (rather than coffee) in his mouth.

"That's right. I'll be right back. Meet you in the living room." He headed into the kitchen. She watched as he walked away from her, thinking what a great ass he had.

"Fine." Marina got up and went into the living room, small but well-appointed with a big soft couch, television, stereo and a couple of incidental tables and lamps. It was a comfortable room, but despite that she felt tense. She didn't *want* to feel tense, she knew that there was no reason to, yet there was no stopping it. It wasn't wholly a bad tension; after all it was merely a physical manifestation of anticipation.

She felt like a teenager again, not that it was wrong: she felt more edgy than she had been as a teenager because during those times she hadn't known, really, what to expect. It was a time of testing, of learning how to grope in the dark, of learning what was good and was bad, and which of the two was better. Now that she was older— a year and a half from teenager-hood— she felt old and rather licentious. Now she felt like she was in a phase of exploration; she had the knowledge and was putting it to use.

Marina knew it was only a matter of time before she became really very jaded (she felt a only a little jaded then, but enough to made her feel wicked, which was great) and blasé.

The room was quiet and just as tense as she was; it seemed ready to pounce on her. The shadows in the corners seemed too real; the light seemed too artificial, like a stage just before the actors appear. Marina had a very strong sense of unreality, as if this was just one moreof her fantasies that seemed a little more credible than usual. The room was like a stage, waiting for a scene to happen. She wondered what Jack was thinking, if he had anything on his mind other than fetching the brandy and then fetching her. Did it all seem so straightforward to him? Was it all so clear cut to him? It was clear cut and staightforward to her, she realized— she wanted him, she intended to have him. Very simple.The thing that was flipping her out was the waiting, the moments up to the one that counted, when he was next to her and they were deep into each other, when she knew that there would be no last minute shying away or more importantly, no more waiting.

In the meantime the only thing to do was to sit there and relax; let the mind clear and the pulse slow down so that she didn't go up in a puff of smoke or have something as distasteful as self-combustion occur. The idea of having pieces of herself fly all over the room was not a pleasant one. After about three minutes Jack entered the room,with the brandy and tow apértif glasses. "It's finally cooling down outside."

"Oh really? I forgot all about the heat, in here. Your air conditioner is fabulous; I didn't notice it was on. In fact I didn't see it. The heat has been unbearable lately, even for this time of year..." She was babbling, and she knew it.

"Just proves what a suave and sophistcated guy I am, " he teased. Marina laughed and got up and looked out of the window as Jack set the glasses down on the end table in front of the couch. The street was busy, with cars speeding past, kids walking by the house. Boring. Marina turned around and faced the room and Jack. He was sitting on the couch, one arm slung along the back. The two glasses of brandy sat on the table.

"Why don't you come over and sit down. Might make conversation a bit easier."

She smiled. "Of course."

Marina walked over to the couch, every step precise and every breath carefully expelled. Finally, to get it over with. As she neared the couch, and had the glass of brandy in her hand, and was about to move to sit down, he snaked an arm around her waist and pulled her down to sit in his lap. Luckily she was not heavy, or he would have been crushed; as it was, she fit just right.

"Tell Santa Claus what you want for Christmas, little girl," Jack said, kissing her on the back of the neck very lightly and every so faintly running a finger along her side. It was a light enough touch to nearly tickle, but contained sufficient pressure to be anything so playful as a tickle.

Marina sipped the brandy and thought for a second. The brandy was warm and hot at the same time; comforting and at the same time charged with a volt that

smarted right behind her eyes. Suddenly it made her wonder what they were doing drinking brandy in 98 degree weather; it wasn't that important.

"Christmas is more than three months away."

"Good girls get their presents early."

"Oh, I didn't realize."

"Does that mean you have never been a good girl."

"That depends on what you perceive as good."

"Ah ha. Turn around. One can always tell by the eyes if the person is good. " She obediently turned around, comfortable in his arms and the moment. Marina felt terrific; this was going well. She took another sip of the brandy, then handed it to him so he could have some. He did, then put the glass down on the table, tightening his hold on her with one arm and with his other hand, he tipped her head back to look into her eyes. His blue ones looked full of ideas, or were they ideals.

She smiled but didn't think as he drew her down closer to him for a kiss. Now, finally, events were set in motion. She kissed him as long and passionately as she could, refusing to think, allowing herself only to revel in sheer feeling. His lips were firm and purposeful, just like those of a smut novel hero. That was exactly what she felt like she was in, so broadly and cleanly marked were the feeling and reasons. The only way she could describe the way he kissed her was thoroughly, fully, obliteratingly. She felt her persnality dissolve in her potion of feeling.

Minutes dragged by, every nanosecond noted, recorded and analyzed by hands and mouth. Marina felt her clothing become disarranged; felt her thoughts and mind become dissarranged even more. Eerily, Jack seemed to be able to anticipate her every move and desire, and improve upon them. It was a reveling experience. It was also going to be a very long evening, with any luck.

She sat away from him for a second, looking at him looking at her. His hands ran all over her body, belying the stillness of the rest of his body; only faintly detectable was the steady, just a bit heavy breath issuing from his body. Jack looked down at her, with a wry smile and a leer in his eyes.

"Well, have you decided? Have I been naughty, or have I been nice?" His arms tightened once more around her. She could feel each finger, the sinew and bone of him. Yum.

"What would you like to be?" he asked.

"Whichever gets me the most presents," she told him, looking at him enticingly, smiling pseudo-solemnly and challenging.

"What sort of presents would you like?" She shrugged and half-giggled.

"Fun things. Nice things. I'll leave it up to you. Surprise me." Sitting so close to him, she could see every minute almost unformed wrinkle and laugh line, every eyelash. She even dared to look down to his lips, which were the source of so much promise and of so many promises. As she had finished raping his lips with her eyes she continued on to his nose. A nice nose, that was all she could say; it wasn't sharp enough to cause discomfort when he kissed her. His eyes.

Marina decided not to think about his physiognomy, instead she would just shut down for awhile and get into the experience. It wasn't so often that one lived a smut

novel.

Twenty minutes later, Marina and Jack were involved in the following situation: they were more or less in a state of undress; they had not yet had Biblical knowledge of one another but were about to do so.

"So what do you think,"Jack said as he ran a nice firm tan hand up and down and all around her thigh. Her left thigh.

"Oh, I don't know, what do you mean." Marina was not really into the conversation.

"I've wanted to do this for a long time," he said, as he kissed her into a silent frenzy, all over and beyond even that.

"Why has it taken so long then," she said lazily, even less into the conversation. He paused.

"I don't know, it just didn't seem right." His hands returned to their usual program.

"Oh, so you think it's right now."

"Yeah, don't you?" She wished he would just shut up and do what he should be doing.

"Of course.

"I wonder if we should...after all, it might cause repercussions."

"Oh Jack. Don't do anything you don't want to do, for god's sake."

"Marina, this is serious. I don't know now." He sat up, rolled over and looked at the ceiling, looking very serious indeed.

Twenty minutes after that, Jack, the over-principled but evidently not oversexed libertine was home, no doubt pondering the mysteries of the universe and the fairness of the judicial system. Marina felt alright, despite the fact that she had not in fact been able to enjoy that so longed for tryst. She was disappointed, but she knew that she should have known what happened would happen. Jack, unlike any man she had ever known, had turned down sex becuase of moral objections. He believed that in the long run they would be happy that they had not followed their hormones. He believed that only evil could follow such a coupling, not only wrecking their friendship but no doubt the ecosystem, the stratosphere and the free world as they knew it.

He had been so persuasive that she felt *relieved* that they had not had a wonderfully exciting and completely fulfilling sexual encounter. A friendship was a terrible thing to just throw off with one's clothes, and she still had that. And who knew, maybe one day she would have that tryst. But the important thing was, she and Jack had resisted temptation and saved their their fantasies, their respect for one another and most of all they had saved their friendship. She felt terribly grown-up and kind of satisfied as she watched the late night news.

EPILOGUE

Jack never spoke to Marina again.

Tweety

(for Gertrude Stein and Mel Blanc)

I thought I saw and just before
before I saw I pussy thought
it crossed my path it did it did
I think I thought I saw a sight
beyond my cage beyond all that
a big mean hungry puddy tat.

I did!

david cohen

Earnie the Productmonger™

by dave morrisin

Of course you as a reader should realize that this product is now completely obsolete (Earnie the productmonger™ has left his mark on our little corner of the globe. Weep for those tots who would strive to be artists in the future. Feel remorse upon recognizing that there can be no room for creativity. Earnie has cornered the market once again!

When Earnie first came to our town he seemed harmless enough. He took on a few odd jobs, peformed menial tasks, did whatever was necessary to survive. He looked unintelligent as a matter of fact. Secretly everyone laughed at good old Earn as he scraped around just trying to survive.

Earnie had the worst taste in clothes, cars, movies, food—you name it. He was an outcast, a scapegoat, a silly little man whom everyone made fun of. But then things began to change...

Earnie began to lose weight and his compexion started to clear up. Maybe Earn started to use Stridex™ and watch Richard Simmons on TV. What a sight that would have been!! Old "Earnie baby" doin' aeorbics and slapping gallons of medicated zit medicine on his face. He seemed to be getting smarter, too. Someone even claims to have seen Earn reading Plato's Republic™ in the parking lot of the Howard Johnson's. He was eating a Tendersweet™ Clam Platter and had a terrific hard on. No one was sure whether Earn's woodie was due to the the clams or the Plato—maybe it was a bizarre mixture of the two.

Suddenly Earnie bergan to exhibit signs of extremely good taste. He started opening the door for ladies as they entered buildings. He stopped spitting in public. He even began to zip up his fly. In addition there were scattered reports that Earn had enrolled in several classes which were designed to improve his dancing skills and speech patterns.

By that time Earnie had a devastating complexion and had reduced his bulk to a mere 160 pounds, none of the women in town could leave him alone. This was his first conquest. None of the town members could have possibly known what an evil scourge, a horrible peril, a devastating plague Earn was about to unleash on the community as a whole.

The first power play that Earn made was to change his name to Ralph. This must sound silly —Raaaallph™— but all of the girls loved it. Earn, or Ralph, had sucessfully monopolized al the girls in town. This product had become unattainable as Ralph completely regulated all the women.

eOf course all the guys in town ran out to the library and read up on their Karl Marx. Soon everyone knew that the only way to correct the situation would be to try and find Ralph and either forcebly remove the girls, or try and decieve the unsuspecting Ralph and cheat him out of his women. If these stratagies failed to dissolve Ralph's girl monopoly there was a guy who ran track and was willing to

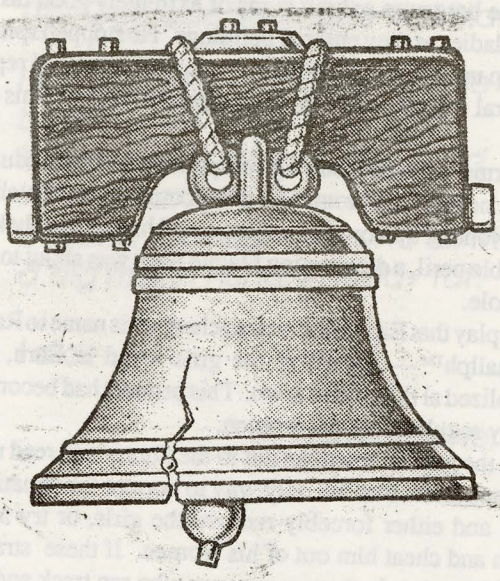
use his dexterity in an attempt to get the girls back. Mr. Marx had writtten that the more dexterous individual would inevitably come away with those products formerly belonging to the slower person.

Unfortunately the men of our small town remained to shatter Ralph's girl monopoly. The girls all unanimously refused to leave the side of their "BelovedRalph™", the now macho stud, who was formerly gross and unattractive Earnie. After the men suffered this tragic loss, and while each new bachelor was at home burning his dinner, Ralph began to enlarge his monoply.

Ralph turned out to be a pretty smooth operator and a darned good capitalist as by the end of the evening Ralph had sucessfully employed his tyrannical skills, and manipulative powers, and had virtually taken over the entire town.

The women were storming the streets as Ralph had organized a proletariat uprising which was to be conducted by these same enraged females. While the *poor unsuspecting* townsmen were valiantly trying to put down this uprising, Ralph skulked around town and obtained each and every product with utter disregard for the well being of his fellow individual. By the end of the evening Ralph had monoplolized all available products, gained control of the means of production, and effectively instituted a dictatorship.

There became no market for creativity because Ralph had monopized the product. If anyone was in need of a creative thought Ralph was the only one who could supply it. He had a whole warehouse full of the junk. Ralph the Productmonger™ had assumed control of our small town, and until Mr. Marx puts out another book, with some other ideas, I guess that everyone in town will be supressed by Ralph.).



The Person in Charge

by robert albers

Hi. How are you doing today? I am writing to tell you something.

I'm not President Cater. I'm not the president of the S.G.A., but I am the one in charge here.

Now that my takeover is complete, I feel it safe to tell you all that *you* are in charge. If you have a problem with this, don;t bother to tell me because I will laugh in your face. If you tell me something is wrong I will not believe you. Everything is going well for me, real well.

I was thinking of rewriting the school's constitution. I didn't do that, however, because all my constitution could have said is "Burn this piece of paper." The piece of paper this is supposed to have been burned would be in the student handbook; this being the case we would have a lot of burnt student handbooks. I didn't want ash all over my campus, so I did not rewrite the constitution.

Now you know that I would have rewritten the constitution but decided against doing so. If you believe me on that issue I'll tell you something else— I don't care whether you follow the rule stated in my unwritten constitution or not. If I had written it I would have done what it said to do, even though that would have meant destroyng my own constitution. None the less, I care not whether you heed my words.

—Go on and do whatever the fuck you want and leave me, your liberator, alone. Now that everything is explained I do not expect to be bothered with all the petty little problems you've imagined or invented. If any problems do occur, I'll refer them to the person in charge. YOU.

Dust

You tie dyed me into a bright blue butterfly
With wrinkled cotton wings
and a blustery smile
that you only see when it's warm
I learned how to fly one day
while you created philosophies on spider webs
and sat in a dark empty room
safe from everything
but dust.
When I drag you out to prove
the heavens aren't made of stucco
don't tell me there is no God
or frighten me with stoic glances
Smile on my whims and
I will tell you how
to give butterflies magic dust to fly
from the premature settling of
your mind.

Jennifer M. Harrison

Romance in the Eighties

by Kelly Lamoree

For starters, Justin was a guy who thought that he could do no wrong. Every morning when he woke up, and opened his ever so expressive eyes to a new day, he smiled. Every day was but another assurance that he was the most wonderful being on the planet; he allowed for a couple of near-misses—people who came close to his state of perfection but who since they weren't actually weren't him, couldn't absolutely qualify—but he felt confident that every day thereafter would be the same.

Justin was not bored by this unchanging routine of being the most splendid and exciting person; it never occurred to him to be anything other than thrilled with his life: He had it all.

He had looks —patrician, noble features, one of those cleft chins that women are crazy for, a boyish mien that fooled so many into believing that he was if not innocent, then endearingly romantic. He could have been an ad for Prince Charmings anonymous, with his blonde hair and perfect profile, blue eyes that melted at jus the right moments.

He had *brains* — all through prep school he'd garnered the highest grades. It didn't matter if he had to cheat to get them—since he did in the end get them, it proved that he was entitled to them. In college he made Phi Beta Kappa. He always knew or always seemed to know the right people, which of course is so important, and knew where to find things,people or services, which was part of the reason that he was so popular.

He had *ancestry* —his was one of the first families of the World, let alone some hokey state like Virginia or Georgia. He wore a family ring and often thought of the lost estates in France.

And more than anything else, Justin had charm. Of course his looks, brains and pedigree attracted people—that was to be expected. That was their primary purpose. But he had a personality that could melt more than hearts of tender young women, as well as any other type whose heart had been known to melt. The Governors of Colorado and Wyoming had, over dinner, asked him to stay away from the Rockies and the Tetons (and any other miscellaneous mountains that he might come across) for fear that his charm could melt stone, too. The rest of the country, not to mention Europe, carelessly let Justin come and go, heedless of the damage he could incur.

His charm had gotten him everything. Justin could, of course, have attributed his sucesses to acumen or luck, but he would not. He preferred to believe that it was his own personal charm, not the looks or brains inherited from his ancestors distingué, which gave him the women, the money, the power. Anything he wanted he could have, for no one was more splendid, after all, and Justin wanted it all. After all, it was only a matter of asking for it.

It was of no importance that he didn't live in Trump Tower or a Scottish castle, or that he did not yet have the high-pressure and very important job or even the society wife to go along with it. It was all a matter of going for it. In the interim, he was comfortable. He had a spacious appartment, paid for by his current job and subsidies from the family.

The job was not drudgery, nothing even remotely sky-blue collar; the collar on a job for Justin had to be nothing less than a white so white as to be nearly invisible. Currently he was employed as a data analyst for a large corporation. Justin knew something about computers, having taken a couple of courses in school, but no one ever asked him specifically what a data analyst did, and he was able to charm his boss, or rather, upper-level collegue into giving him a lot of leeway. Justin occasionally did reports that indicated some amount of work, of which he was proud.

He was proud because he knew that a lot of other people knew that he did little more in the course of a day than read the *Wall Street Journal*, take coffee breaks, and make noises around the main terminal every so often, while they toiled and filed and plugged in information and worried about the next raise. They had to worry about things like that, he reasoned— they didn't have his looks, his pedigree, and most certainly not his charm.

His charm had gotten him the job, and also many women. He kept the job and sometimes the women for a few days; they were another group of people that he loved being around, for he could with a fair amount of certainty chart the responses of women when they came in contact with his personality; it was like when the Egyptian tombs were opened, he reasoned—the fresh air was too much for the old moldy things. The women—like the mummies—never knew what hit them, after they had met him. Unlike the tombs they were not moldy, not in the least—Justin was able to charm some of the best catches in Westchester.

Justin liked all sorts of women, so long as they were either rich or good in bed. He actually preferred those in the former category, especially if they were good-looking— he could take them out and show the world that he had attracted a good looking and probably very wealthy woman who was slave to his every desire. He figured that one day he would marry someone, returning to the round of counry-club parties and yacht club dinners, after he had finshed searching for someone with the right balance sheet and bone structure. Until then, he was free to roam the Wild Kingdom, king of the lions.

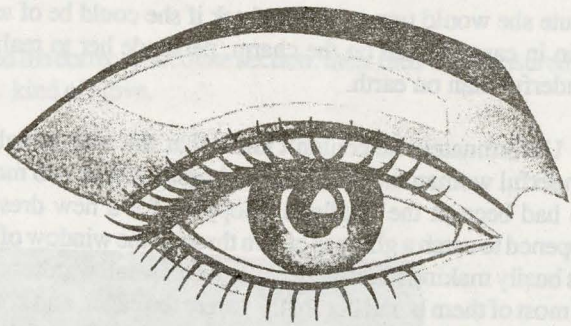
It was very rare that a woman refused to date Justin; it was rare that he asked out anyone who might refuse. Since he never considered that anyone would ever refuse him anything, unless they were insane or under the influence of heavy drugs, this made life easier.

Justin, as mentioned, had brains, and knew that it paid to use them when it came to women; he asked them out to places which sounded like the apotheosis of glamour, places that anyone would die to go to, even just once. With the lure in place, Justin drew them in by complimenting them in a seemingly off-hand manner, which he supposed added just the right touch of sincerity. Often he *was* sincere; he wouldn't

ask out a woman that he couldn't compliment in some way.

Sometimes he asked out women who he could barely compliment, because he had just gone out with a spate of nearly-perfect, patrician women and needed something to stir his blood a little. He was always able to seduce his *Town and Country* women, but it wasn't nearly as exciting as a girl who might be from the wrong side of the tracks. They were the ones he went to for "smutty fun, " as he called it; they were often promiscuous and hence more skilled in the ways of pleasing a man. And with every new way he found that he could be pleased, the more he could call himself a great lover, which obviously added to his self-esteem. These girls also didn't know the same people as he did, and so could not tell tales later on.

One day Justin stopped by the local gourmet grocery store on his way home from the ofice; he was all out of Belgian chocolate bars that he liked with his *café au lait* in the mornings. Mornings, that is, when he had a guest. It was part of his Five Point Plan of Dating; when a woman stayed the night, a woman who was of his social class whom he might want to see again, he made sure to have a wonderful breakfast for them in the morning so that they would be even more impressed with him, be fooled into thinking that they would get the same treatment every time they stayed over and after marriage perhaps too. And if the two of them happened to get along especially well, and he stayed over at her place, she would feel compelled to have something as nice for him.



As Justin strolled through the aisles, he saw familar faces and greeted them. He knew most of the other shoppers, but that day he saw someone he hadn't noticed before. It was a new advisor, which was what personnel who worke at the store were called. She was dark haired girl with the most fabulous cheekbones he had ever seen. Cheekbones that were so high that airplanes had be advised of their presence for fear of a collision. Cheekbones so aristocratic that entire British Royal Family (whom he considered to be glorified country squires), the Esterhazys, the von Furstenburgs, the Hollenzolerins, would give what ever they had left for lineage such as this girl might have. Or at least the cheekbones.

Justin stood there in the Imported Sweets Aisle, staring. The Girl was attired in the discreet uniform of the establishment, but on her it looked as if it had been designed for her. She was the embodiment of everything he had every wheeled, dealed, tricked, lied, stole and finagled to attain. This, he thought in his shock and bemusement, this must be his consort, the mother of his children. The rest of her was just as satisfactory; shiny, rich looking hair, pale, creamy skin like Mikimoto pearls,

delicate hands, a wonderful body. Of course the cheekbones took precedence, but the rest of her was great too.

From his vantage point, in his bemusement, Jusitn studied her face, trying not to sigh. She had the wonderful disdainful expression that only a few people can really master, that look of beyond blasé. That did it. Justin, the most wonderful man ever created, was lost. A victim to his own fantasies. He had alwas wanted someone just like her because he beleved that no one like that could exist. But there she was, proving that even *his system had a glitch.*

He suddenly realized that there was something wrong with the picture; she was working there, not shopping there. Why, he wondered, could that be? She could not come from a normal, plebian, proletariat backround; that would ruin everything. Life could not be that cruel; how could he reconcile himself to it? But he glanced ather again, and knew he had to try.

She was checking the shelves, doing some sort of inventory. He sauntered over to her, stood there for a few moments, studying the products around her. That was so that she could become aware of his presence, and then affected by it. Within a minute she would turn to him and ask if she could be of assistance. Then he could begin in earnest, turn on the charm, persuade her to realize that he was the most wonderful man on earth.

Unfortunately he couldn't know that she was thought that *she* was the most wonderful woman on earth. She had first sen him two months ago, on a Saturday. She had been at the Galleria, shopping for a new dress or whatever when she happened to catch a glimpse of him through the window of the tie store, where Justin was busily making his selections for his new fall wardrobe. She had several suitors, but most of them bored her for they were too eager, and not one of them was perfect. They were all good looking, smart, sucessful. One of them was slightly arrogant, but tentatively so.

The moment she saw Justin, Katie knew that she had found what she was looking for: the Most Arrogant Man on Earth. She was, as well as being the most wonderful, the most Arrogant Woman on earth so she was thrilled.

From that second she plotted. She learned all she could about him, and mapped out stratagies. Finally, all was ready. Katie took a leave of absence from the jewelery store where she was assistant manager, and got herself a job at the gourmet food store where Justin shopped apporoximately three times a week.

She looked up, and saw him standing there. She raised one delicate eyebrow, pushed back a strand of hair with a motion that sent her numerous bracelets rattling, and asked, in a voice full of a 'why must you bother me' drawl, "Do you require any assistance, sir?"

Justin was down for the count as soon as he heard the voice. This was not one of those eager to please young hussies he usually dated; this was an arrogant shop girl who didn't give a damn if he could get her fired.

"Yes, if it wouldn't be any bother," he replied in his most snobbish tone, which

indicated that he thought that she'd damn well better do it. "I need to find some really fine fine Belgian choclate. Not the run of the mill sort, you know, the really *good* chocolate. I wouldn't suppose you'd know where to find it."

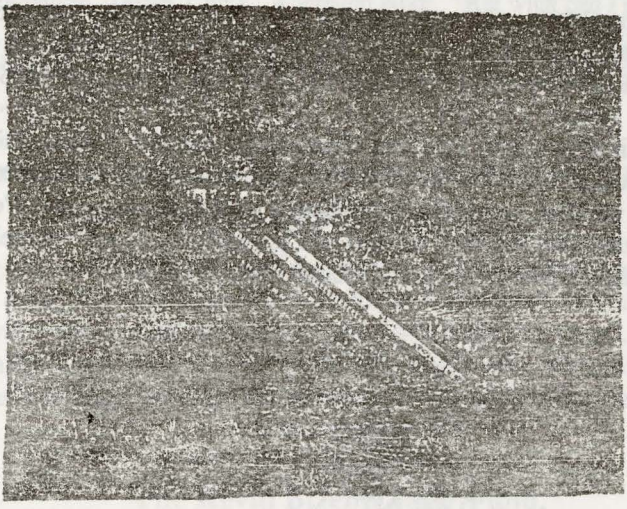
"I see no reason at all why I should know where to find it, " she replied. "I"ve only worked here for three years."

"That's funny; I've never seen you around."

"Maybe you didn't look hard enough." He was silent. She continued, "if you'd follow me, sir, I'll kindly direct you to your destination." Justin nodded and followed her as she turned to show him the chocolate aisle. He was writhing inside; he had to have this girl. She was it. A bitch, with looks, attitude, the works. The thing that tortured him was that she was a shopgirl; his ego couldn't stand it. Maybe he could persuade her to find employment or some other diversion elsewhere. Whatever it took.

Katie was pleased; here was an arrogant guy with all the qualifications. It didn't matter if he had an ego the size of her checking account; she knew that she was the superior of the two.

By the time they reached the correct chocolate section, their future was assured. They were madly in (some kind of) love.



Afterword (but not really)

The Story behind SPLINTERS

by Kelly Lamoree

It was a hot summer night and the nothing was stirring, not even a mouse. At the O'Neill Literary House, the heat hung like a vaporous fog, disturbed only now and then with weak breaths of air. I worked in the Little Office on my first novel, chiseling away at it, augmenting it and in general arguing with it to please, make some sense. In the middle room was a young man who I had met only a few weeks before. I had worked at Miller Library and he at the Dining Service; during the summer people who stay tend to run into one another and so we did. We had been in Creative Writing class together the previous semester and had a healthy respect for each other's work. I had asked him early in the summer whether he was going to contine work on his novel; he said that he hadn't thought about it. Soon, I persuaded him to join me over at the Lit House after work; it would be nice to have company, and especially that of someone who understood what it was like to wrestle with a big project such as that which I toiled over.

After Bill started coming over to the Lit House, though, we got less work done, starting to talk between chapters, and more and more frequently. We discovered a mutual delight in satire, parody, irony and all of that other good stuff. We were tired of seeing the same abstruse although surely worthy work in literary magazines on campus in the past three years. We soon decided that the campus had not had a satirical magazine in an awfully long time and so we took it upon ourselves to begin one.

You hold it in your hands. Our first effort, and not the last. We love this kind of writing, and even if we get truckloads of hate mail, are stoned in the marketplace, and driven from the state, we shall keep writing it. Till death do us part. We hope that you are challenged, angered, amused and provoked by it, and we welcome anyone who wishes to join us next time around. See you then!

kevin doesn't have an eraser

Each day is a struggle for Kevin Brien.
He tries to outline the major tenets of Marxist philosophy,
and sketch the dialectic of history,
dedicating himself to the enlightenment of a generation of students.
Yet he is missing even the basic teacher's tool: the eraser.
Something so seemingly insignificant to most of us;
and yet, most teachers cannot imagine getting along without it.
Still, Kevin presses on. Each day, he begins anew.
Each day, he goes home with chalk dust all over his hands,
up his elbows, in his beard, and on the back of his shirt.
His courage is inspiring. His laundry bills are enormous.
Yet he continues against all odds...

But he can't do it alone.

All over the world, young children are struggling under the pressures of a capitalist system that they never made, but is making them. The price is great. Unemployment. Starvation. Death. Chalk. Alienated labor. "But what can I do?" asks Joe College. "It's so far away. How does it concern me?" Here, at an affluent, predominatly white college in the middle of nowhere, the problems of Kevin, and youngsters like him, seem very far away.

But they are here, even now, in our very own backyard.

You CAN help.

Pick up your checkbook. Make out the donation. It only takes a moment, but that moment could make the difference in the life of Kevin Brien, and others like him. And knowing you've made a difference can make a difference to you, too. We can't bring erasers to every corner of the world. But it only takes one eraser to eradicate chalk dust—to bring new hope to a man who is struggling to help us all.

Won't you help?

The Kevin Brien Eraser Fund,
Concerned Students for Brienism
Washington College, Chestertown, MD. 21620

The Children's War

by bill beekman

(opening excerps from a novel-in-progress)

1. GENESIS

Bang!

It started innocently. Few things do. I was nineteen and ordinary, locked in a dormitory cell that I didn't want to be in. My rich relatives who had rich plans for me made me be there. I held a gun in my hand, closed my eyes and pulled the trigger.

A bullet pierced my left temple, drilling through my head on a path to my brain. Nothing happened. I pulled the trigger again, slowly. The bullet continued its path. Chunks of my head and brain flew everywhere, staining the white painted cinderblock. People in the backround screamed. I slumped to the ground, dead.

"Death is a waste." That's what campus security said when they found my body. They acted calmly, though, taking various angled photographs of my body and blood and chunks of head and brain.

"Death is a waste." That's what the police officers who came in and took more pictures and carried my body away said, also. They filed a report which looked like this: Johnny Prospect, age nineteen, death by suicide. It rang like a bell.

"Death is a waste." That's what the black maintenance men said as they dropped dripping chunks of my head and brain into a dirty brown hall trashcan. They brought buckets and rags and brushes and white paint with them, and made the cell room new again. Seem new, at least, though it couldn't fool the superstitious who claimed to still see blood stains on the walls and floor and who heard the ghost of Johnny Prospect walk the halls at night.

Death is a waste.

Yet nothing ever happened. I opened my eyes and stopped imagining. It gave me a headache. And that is how it all began.

That was years ago, years and years ago, back in nineteen hundred eighty seven, before I had smoked millions of cigarettes and downed millions of gin and tonics. That was when I wasn't an old and rambling fart with a broken mind, when I could actually get some pleasure out of shooting myself with green plastic water guns. That was before I saved the world.

After I pretended to kill myself back in nineteen hundred eighty-seven, I became obsessed with death. "Death is a waste" I said to myself, as I opened eyes. And I slung my left arm back and pounded the green plastic water gun against the white cinderblock cell walls. It smashed into useless bits. And for the first and last time in my life, I cried.

And I cried. Dad had died the previous summer, of a heart attack on his forty fourth birthday. I hadn't even bought him a card. Dad died while I was away on a

summer joyride with Joey Saverno and Sally Darby and Sandy Gokes, all of whom I haven't seen or heard from or cared about since nineteen hundred eighty seven. I didn't even know that Dad died until I returned a week after his funeral, tanned and oversexed. When I found out that he had died, I said, "Oh, that's too bad." More than a year later it finally hit me as I pretended to kill myself: Death is a waste. So I cried for my Dad, my dead Dad.

I cried for others, too, whom I haven't thought of for years. There was a pimply-faced, greasy-haired girl named Cindy Grant who I went out with for four weeks of my life back in nineteen hundred eighty seven, until she too died, in a car accident two days before I pretended to kill myself with my green plastic water gun. She was a forgettable creature with one exception: she was the most giving, able, and satisfying sex partner that I ever had. I cried because I missed that. Death is a waste.

There is one person who I didn't cry for then who I would like to cry for now. His name is Randy Font. I shared my white cinderblock cell and my marijuana and my women and my philosophies on life with Randy. Randy died a year after I shattered the green plastic water gun, when an inmate at the prison he was sent to for selling cocaine knifed him when Randy wouldn't let the inmate ram his penis up Randy's ass. Good for you, Randy. I lift my gin and tonic to you: "Good for you, Randy."

And looking at the shattered green pieces of plastic, I cried for me. "Death is a waste," I repeated to myself. "A waste, a waste, a waste is death!" And with my mind thoroughly entertained by death, a fifty watt G.E. light bulb flickered on in my head. A strange and wonderful idea which would change the world crept in: What if no one ever died again.

I stopped crying. "What if no one ever died again?," I continued to think, and my mind saw great visions until Randy Font came in and asked if wanted to get stoned like we did almost every day, and I obliged. And we sat and laughed at each other as we smoked pot. We both felt like we'd never die, although neither of us thought of no one ever dying again.

A year later, of course, Randy died. And later still, I saved the world.

2. SONS AND DOCTORS

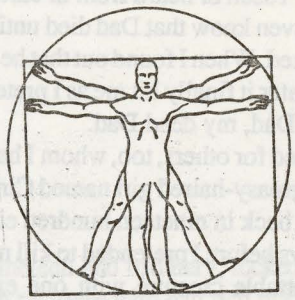
Here are some things that you should know about me, if you care:

I am Johnathon Abel Prospect, the only child of Dr. and Mrs. Abel Wilson Prospect. People call me Johnny, Johnny Prospect. When I was young people called me ferret face and I spit in their eyes.

Prospect men die young, like Dad did, of heart attacks in their mid-forties. Dad died like that, as did his Dad and his Dad's Dad and his Dad's Dad's Dad and so on.

Prospect men have exactly one son, who is always a doctor. I remember sitting on my grandmother's lap when I was about four, and her telling me that someday I'd be a doctor. "Work real hard, Johnny" she said, "and someday you'll be a doctor just like Dad is and your Grandpop was before he died." She never told me about dying in my mid-forties, though.

There were problems, of course: I didn't want to be a doctor, and I didn't want to die in my mid-forties. When I was five I told Dad that I wanted to play baseball when I was older. "We'll see, Johnny," he said, "we'll see." And later I told him that I wanted to be a fireman and a golfer and a race car driver and a police man and dentist and on and on, but never a doctor. And he always told me, "We'll see, Johnny."



When I was fourteen I told Dad what I really wanted to do. "Dad," I said, " I don't want to be a doctor."

"We'll see, Johnny, we'll see."

"No, we won't," I yelled. "I won't be a doctor because I don't want to be one. I want to write books."

He laughed. "Come with me," he said, and he grabbed my arm and shoved me in his red convertible Mercedes and took me to his office. There, he looked at me sympathetically and said, "I understand, son, but sometimes we have to do things that we don't want to. I've been doing that for years and look how far it has gotten me."

Dad showed his stethoscope and appointment book and scale and diplomas. He used to do this every Saturday afternoon. He held out his arms. "Someday," Dad said, " when I'm old and if you work real hard, you can take over this office."

He lied. He knew that he would never grow old because none of the men in the Prospect family ever do. They all die before they are fifty. But I didn't know that until after Dad died and Mom told me about the Doctor Prospect Only Son Death Syndrome. So I lied and said that taking over his office when he was old sounded nice, even though I wanted to write books. And he smiled in relief.

After that, I always let Dad believe that I really wanted to be a doctor. I studied hard. I got good grades. I scanned through medical journals. I made Dad feel proud. And finally he died.

I wasn't free yet, though. Grandmom was still around pestering me to become a doctor. "Your father won't rest well in his grave," she said, "until you become a doctor."

Grandmom pestered Dad when he was alive to pester me to become a doctor. And Dad gave in, like all of the other Prospect men had done to Prospect mothers-in-law for generations. And when Dad died, Grandmom pestered directly to me, so I gave in to her, too, and went to college where I got high with Randy Font and shot myself with green plastic water guns, with the best intentions of becoming a doctor.

And, finally, she died, too, on the day that Randy Font got busted for dealing cocaine. It's a good thing that Grandmom died on that day, or else I may have gotten busted, too, and died in jail like Randy, and never have been able to save the world. Death used to be so convenient.

I went home for Grandmother's funeral, where I told Mom that I didn't want to become a doctor. She cried and said that it was OK if I didn't become a doctor. She said to become whatever I wanted to become, and that she'd always love me no matter what. So I went back to school and failed out and moved in with her, where I did nothing but eat, sleep and watch TV until I saved the world. And Mom loved me until the day that she died.

3. MY ONLY SON

If Mom had known any better, though, she would have locked me out of her house. Or she would have locked me in when I was young and still had hope, and made me study anatomy books so that I'd become a doctor just as planned. She would have had to have started early, though, because I was only fifteen when I screwed up and my first and only son was conceived.

She never knew about that. I never told anyone in my family. They never knew that he was born or conceived or that I had sex or that I even thought about girls. It was for the better.

When I was sixteen he was born, Robert James Calbott. Robert James Calbott was the son of me, Johnathon Abel Prospect, and my fifteen year old fuck-partner, Nancy Patricia Calbott, who I only slept with once and didn't even enjoy doing after I had done her.

I only knew Nancy from Biology class. We hardly ever talked. When she discovered that she was pregnant, she came running to me. Here's what she said three months after the one and only night that we had sex:

"Johnny, I have something very important to discuss with you"

I thought that she was going to say that she wanted to sleep with me again, to which I would have responded no.

"Yes," I said, partially ignoring her.

"Do you remember that night about three months ago when we, you know, when we..."

"...slept together," I said with a yawn.

"Yeah. Well, um, you see, um...I'm pregnant."

My mouth dropped. "You're what?"

"I'm pregnant. And you're the father."

"I thought that you had some sort of pills to prevent that."

"I wouldn't take those things," she yelled. "What do you think I am, some sort of sleaze who just sleeps around with any guy. I thought that you had more respect for me than that. Anyway, I'm Catholic"

"Well, what are you going to do?," I asked, ignoring her question and religion.

"That's what I came to you for. I wanted to know what you thought."

"Have an abortion," I told her bluntly.

She started to cry. "Johnathon Prospect, I hate you," she yelled, "and I never want to see you again and I don't want you to be my baby's father." And then she stampeded out of the room and never told a soul that I was responsible for the fetus

in her womb that turned out to be Robert James Calbott, my only son.

Nancy's mother and father bugged her for months and months about who the father was, but she would never tell them. She never told them anything. She didn't even tell them that she was pregnant; her parents didn't find out until Robert James was only two and a half months away from being born. That's when Nancy started to show very obviously that she was pregnant and could no longer hide it.

When her parents discovered that she was pregnant they were furious. When they discovered that she was six and a half months pregnant they were even more furious. They said that they were going to kill the bastard who had done this to her. And they said that they were not going to raise another child because two was enough. And then they stormed out of the room just like Nancy stormed out of the room on me. Like parents, like child

It's a lucky thing for Nancy and my only son Robert that she had a sweet and loving sister named Mary. Mary was twenty-two and kind and compassionate and virtuous and all of those other adjectives that mean things that nice people are. And Mary took Nancy in and held her and let her cry on her shoulder and paid for all of her doctor bills. Mary let Nancy stay with her after Robert was born, until Nancy's parents finally accepted the fact that their sixteen year old daughter had had her own child. And then Nancy moved back home and went back to school and everyone lived happily ever after because of sweet little Mary.

Well, not everybody. I wasn't happy because I had a son roaming around that I didn't want. Nancy wasn't happy because I didn't want her son. Nancy's parents weren't happy because now they were grandparents and they didn't even know who the father of their grandchild was. Later, many more people would be made unhappy because of Robert James Calbott. But he'd be the unhappiest of them all, and try to pay everyone back. Perhaps Nancy should have taken my advice after all.

But she didn't. She decided to raise a child that she wasn't prepared to raise who would never become a doctor and further ruin the string of Doctor Prospect Only Son Deaths which I had already ruined. Robert would end up ruining a lot of other things, though, before he finally died, without ever knowing that I was his father, of a heart attack when he was forty-three.

And what happened to me? I lived forever.

4. INGA'S SONG

This is why I lived forever: I don't know.

This is how: The White Pill.

Forever is a long time. For me it's lasted about ten thousand years or so, so far, although I really don't know since we don't keep track of time any more. We stopped doing that after The War for the Children, when it was apparaent that time was only relevant for those who didn't have enough of it.

Or for those writing books.

After I shot myself with the green water pistol, after I thought and forgot about the great and wonderful idea of no one ever dying again, after I failed out of college

and moved in with my mother, where I devoted my life to eating and sleeping and watching television, I met a woman. A very special woman. Her name is Inga.

And I started to write a novel, a shoddy, slutty, sex-filled novel entitled *Inga's Song*, which was supposed to be a glorified story of my life with Inga. It was supposed to be a true.

I laugh now when I look a what I wrote. I wasn't a good writer then, either.

I wrote about a weak and insignificant me who was saved from myself by the beautiful and giving Inga who came to me one night in a dream, and never stopped coming back. Inga loved and loves and I loved and love her, and if she were Robert James Calbott's mother I'm sure that things would have worked out differently. For example, perhaps I would have never saved the world.

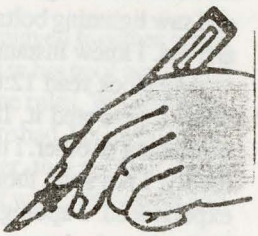
Every night while I dreamed, Inga and I made mad, passionate love. And then Inga whispered sweet nothings in my ear. She said things like this: "One day, Johnny, one day you will be the most important man on the face of the earth. You will be Ruler of the World, and I will be your queen."

And then I would make mad passionate love to her again. And she would whisper more sweet nothings: "Think, think, Johnny Prospect. Think real hard, and one day you will save the world. And one day I will be your queen."

And then we would make mad passionate love again, and on and on until I woke up the next day, tired. And one day she would be my queen.

5. THE WHITE BOY

Every sweet nothing that Inga promised to me came true. I thought hard, I became the most important man on the face of the earth, I became Ruler of the World, and I saved the world. And more.



But I could not save the Dead Deads.

After Inga arrived in my life, strange things began to happen to me, as if I were stuck in a novel with no free will being tantalized by a crazy writer. I thought of weird things like that when I wrote, even if I knew they were impossible.

Here is one of those weird things:

I once got a note which I didn't understand from I don't know where which said: "Forget this world. One day in the future you may return to give one gift to make up for your loss. Go now, and prepare for your future. Prepare to save the world." The note was signed W.B..

This book, incidentally, has become that gift to the Dead Deads from the twentieth century. Enjoy.

The note from W.B. made me stop writing *Inga's Song* anticlimatically at the part where I had just stolen one hundred boxes of rubbers to use with Inga when I slept so that I didn't get semen all over my bedcovers. I used to get yelled at by our maid,

Mrs. Finch, who changed my bedcovers, when that happened.

I never wrote another line of *Inga's Song*. I started over from scratch. If I had kept writing I would have gotten to the most significant moment of my life, even more significant than my great and wonderful idea of no one ever dying again. This new moment was the means for actualizing the great and wonderful idea, although I wasn't aware of it at the time. The moment was brief and beautiful and changed the rest of mankind. It went something like this:

I was lying in my bedroom thinking of what the strange note that I had just received from out of nowhere meant. I was thinking about writing something about it in *Inga's Song*, but I felt too tired, so I drifted off into a light sleep. Then, there was a knock on the door.

I thought that it was Mrs. Finch so I didn't answer. I heard the knock again. Still, I didn't answer. It continued until finally I crawled out of my bed and answered it. There was no one there.

I turned around and scratched my head and felt like writing even more than I had before. But my feet and head hurt and I was still tired. I laid down and went back to sleep, and then he came.

There was a bright white flash and white sparks flew everywhere. The background of my room disappeared in a grey mist. He appeared.

He was white. He glowed. He was short and thin with a round face. I called him the White Boy.

He never spoke. He looked at me and then pointed. He raised his hands high in the air, looking very important, and spread them out. Closing his eyes, he brought his hands down against his stomach tightly. I watched speechlessly. I heard thunder and saw lightning bolts. He winked at me, and then disappeared as quickly as he had arrived. I knew instantly that the rest of my life would be dramatically changed.

My clock read 12:01 and the alarm was blaring. Someone was banging at my door. I answered it. It was Mrs. Finch. I ignored her as she yelled at me about something or other. I think that she was complaining that my alarm was blaring too loudly. I not sure, though, because I was thinking too much about what I had just experienced. I apologized, saying,"Oh." Then I closed the door on her and went back to my bedroom. I shut the alarm clock off. Everything in the room was the same. I laid on the bed and fell into a peaceful sleep, knowing somehow that my life would never be the same. I dreamed about Inga, and we had the best sex that we ever had that night, even better than the sex that Cindy Grant gave me before she died. And I didn't even use rubbers.

But still I could not save the Dead Deads.

6. THE DEAD DEADS

This is who the Dead Deads are: They are the people who died before I saved the world, and who are still dead, and who will always be dead. They died unprotected. Mom and Dad and Grandmom and Robert and Nancy and Randy and Cindy and all the people of the twentieth century are all Dead Deads. Good for them.

A word to the wise: If you want to live forever, you better make sure that you don't die unprotected.

7. THE WHITE PILL

I called my white glowing round faced visitor the White Boy. I did it without even thinking of the initials on the bottom of the note. After I thought of that, I was sure that I had given him the right name. And I was even more sure that the greatest event in the history of the world had just taken place, and more was about to come.

So I pondered my life for a few moments, thinking about just why the White Boy would choose me. I concluded that I was either a very lucky or a very unlucky son of a bitch. I couldn't determine which.

I thought of my best friend Tom and how we had always played together when we were young. We used to play stickball and Monopoly, and in his pool we played Marco Polo. He always beat me because I never understood the rules. We also used to play school and hit each other on our bare asses when we were bad. He loved doing that. I remembered he used to say that we'd be friends forever, that nothing could ever break us up. "If we ever separate," he said, "God himself will come down and bring us back together."

Somehow, though, it didn't seem like that was why the White Boy had come.

Tom and I separated because I punched him in the mouth one day and knocked out three of his teeth. I did it because he called me ferret-face, which he had been calling me for years. I was sick of, though, and thought that he deserved to be punched. We've never spoken since.

So I thought about Nancy and Robert and the family that I never had. Robert was twelve now and I hadn't seen him once. I wouldn't see him for many more years, until I decided to visit him using the activity console.

First I thought that maybe something bad had happened to Robert and he needed my help. It didn't seem important enough, though. Then I thought that maybe something freaky had happened with him. Maybe Robert was the second coming of Christ or the Antichrist or something like that, and it was up to me set the rest of time straight. I used to have to go to church when I was a kid, and when Reverend

Blackseed gave his sermons I used to dream of things like that happening to me someday.

It didn't make sense, though.

I grew frustrated. I asked Inga for advice. All that she said was this: "Think, think, Johnny Prospect. Think hard and you will save the world. And I will be your queen."

I thought hard. I grew more frustrated. "What am I trying to do," I yelled to myself. "Am I mad, mad, mad?"

I got no answer.

For the second time in my life, I held a gun to my head. For the second time in my life, I shot. And I remembered: What if no one ever died again. It made more sense than anything else.

So I strangely devoted my life to fulfilling this strange and wonderful idea. I had no idea where to start. I knew nothing about medicine or chemistry or physics, and had taken biology only in high school with Nancy Calbott. I still know nothing of any of those things. I knew nothing of the white pill that I found on my television either, the same place where weeks before I had seen the White Boy, and weeks before that I had received his note. When I saw the white pill, I swallowed it, and then fell into a deep sleep.

Inga came to me. She was carrying a gun. I thought that my end had come without me ever becoming anything. She handed it to me and I held it to my head. I pulled the trigger. Chunks of my head and brain didn't fly all over the place. I smiled at her and kept pulling the trigger until I was out of bullets. I was excited by the feeling that I could not be killed.

I was also excited by the heat from Inga's body, as she stood by excited by my happiness. I ripped the clothes from Inga's body; all that she wore was a thin white housedress. She ripped my clothes off and passionately kissed my chest and neck. I pounded deep into her, and she yelled in ecstasy.

When we finally separated we were both breathless and sweating. She took a note from the breast pocket of her torn housedress. It said: "You did well." It was signed W.B..

I woke and Inga left me. I was still breathless, sweaty, and naked. I wondered what to do next. My first instinct was to go back to sleep.

MOONLIGHT AND AMNESIA:

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Have those late nights of pining for the lost love of your life gotten you down?

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Yes, I agree wholeheartedly. The debut of SPLINTERS has been a smashing success.

Published at the O'Neill Literary House
Winter 1987
Washington College
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